

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY OSLO

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 254175

STADIS//////////

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SV, NO

SUBJECT: PROPOSED ARCTIC DRIFTING STATION PROJECT

REF: (A) BUCHANAN-PINKNEY LETTER DATED SEPTEMBER 16;

(B) OSLO'S 4335 (NOTAL)

(C) ONR ARLINGTON TO USDAO OSLO 211258 Z

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1. PROJECT IN QUESTION, AS YOU RIGHTLY POINT OUT, IS IN VERY EARLY STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT, WITH NO FIRM DECISIONS YET TAKEN. IN ANSWER TO MFA'S SPECIFIC QUESTION AS TO WHETHER SUPPLY AIRCRAFT FOR PROPOSED DRIFT STATION WOULD BE MILITARY, WE HAVE BEEN ASSURED BY NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCE THAT PLANE WOULD NOTBE MILITARY.

2. FYI: SECOND, UNASKED QUESTION, CONCERNS FUNDING OF ENTIRE PROJECT. AS THE PROJECT NOW STANDS, THE OFFICE OF

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NAVAL RESEARCH IS VERY INTERESTED AND AN UNDETERMINED PORTION OF THE REQUIRED FUNDS WOULD BE PROVIDED BY THAT BODY. DEPARTMENT BECAME AWARE TODAY THAT ONR HAS REQUESTED FROM USDAO OSLO COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR A VISIT BY MR. LEONARD JOHNSON, PHYSICAL SCIENCES ADMINISTRATOR, EARTH SCIENCES

DIVISION, ONR, ON NOVEMBER 24-25 TO PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSIONS OF NANSEN PROJECT. BASED ON EXPERIENCE IN THE 1960'S IN CONNECTION WITH POSSIBLE INDIRECT NAVY FUNDING OF SVALBARD AIRPORT PROJECT, DEPARTMENT IS CONCERNED THAT MILITARY FUNDING OF THIS PROJECT, AS IT RELATES TO SVALBARD (OR CONCEIVABLY EVEN IF SVALBARD FUNDING HAS NO MILITARY INPUT, MIGHT ALSO POSE A PROBLEM IN OBTAINING APPROVAL BY GON FOR USE OF SVALBARD. ONR POINTS OUT THAT ALTERNATIVE SITES AT THULE AND ALERT WOULD SERVE ALMOST EQUALLY WELL. DEPARTMENT WOULD NATURALLY LIKE TO SEE SVALBARD USED FOR THIS SCIENTIFIC PROJECT FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, AND WOULD WANT TO KEEP SVALBARD WITHIN THE REALM OF POSSIBLE SITES FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. END FYI.

3. DEPARTMENT SUGGESTS THAT MFA BE TOLD THAT NON- MILITARY PLANE WOULD BE USED ON SVALBARD FOR THE PROJECT SHOULD IT GO FORWARD. DEPARTMENT WOULD BE INTERESTED TO LEARN IF NORWEGIANS VOLUNTEER ANY COMMENTS ON PROBLEMS POSED BY MILITARY INVOLVEMENT OF ANY KIND IN THE PROJECT INCLUDING FUNDING. FINALLY, WE WILL APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S VIEWS ON PROPOSED VISIT OF ONR EXPERT AND WHETHER IT WOULD POSE ANY PROBLEMS FOR THE FUTURE SUCCESS IN NORWAY OF WHAT APPEAR TO US AS HIGHLY DESIREABLE PROJECT. KISSINGER

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